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“Are you Africaner?”

AFRICANER,

"

OR

MISSIONARY TRIALS.



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AFRICANER;

OR,

MISSIONARY TRIALS.

IN the month of January, 1806, two very dear brothers, of the name of Albrecht, were making their way across the south of Africa to the borders of Great Namaqua Land ; it was a wearisome journey, and lay by turns over rugged stones or through deep and scorching sand. The shady groves, the green and pleasant valleys, the fields of waving corn, which the children of our dear and pleasant land are wont to look upon, were not to be seen there : it was all one dry and barren desert, and the eyes of the travellers were almost blinded by the glare of the sun reflected from the quartz and granite rocks. Here and there where a thunder cloud had burst and let down a torrent of water, a strip

(3)

of green grass had sprung up ; but these spots were few and far between. Few were the rivers that watered that thirsty land, and the beds of some through which water once had flowed, were dry. The salt hot-springs they found could scarcely slake the thirst of the travellers. They were poor too, and had not been able to buy food enough for their journey, and they suffered dreadfully from hunger and thirst.

The journey of these brothers was as tedious as it was toilsome. Their wagons were drawn by oxen, and they went little more than two miles in an hour, and eight hours in a day. Besides which they had not enough oxen to draw the load, and they sometimes stuck fast in the sand, and sometimes in the mud of the river. Some of the oxen fainted in the yoke, and were obliged to be left behind. Nor were the wild men of the desert disposed to help them. They had been cruelly

used by white men, and were jealous of the visits of Europeans. They would rather have laid the travellers dead on the plain with their poisoned arrows, than have helped them on their way. There were other dangers in travelling through an African wilderness—serpents, scorpions, and venomous insects crossed their path by day, and at night the roar of the lion, echoing from rock to rock, often startled them from their brief repose.

Yet they did not repent or turn back. As their troubles increased, their hearts grew bolder, for they were nearing their journey's end. At length they reached the place which was to be their home. It was a barren and unlovely spot. No spreading trees, no mountain, glen, or cave, were near to shelter them from the noontide sun, or from the attacks of savages. They called the settlement "Warm Bath," from the salt hot-spring which was to supply them with water. The house was such

as they could build with their own hands, and their furniture was little better. Their table was for a long time the lid of a wagon chest, and was covered with the most scanty fare.

The men who sought this comfortless abode came from a far distant land, where they had left behind them dearly loved friends and all the comforts of life. They were not culprits escaping from the pursuit of justice, nor travellers on a passing visit brought by curiosity and the hope of fame, nor men seeking for treasures hid in the earth. They had crossed the stormy ocean and the pathless desert, from love to Jesus and the souls of men, and when the wanderers of the desert drew near to listen to the words of eternal life, they felt themselves richly repaid for all that they had suffered, and were suffering still.

There was one who came and stood among the listeners with fixed attention and earnest look; he was a robber and a murderer. White

and black men alike trembled at his name, and the British government at the Cape offered a thousand dollars to the man who would bring down the head of the outlaw Africaner. Yet the missionaries feared him not, and the fierce marauder, who turned not from his bloody purpose for the orphan's cry or the widow's wail, felt his heart strangely moved when he heard of One who, by wicked hands, was crucified and slain that he might save the chief of sinners.

Africaner had not always been a robber and an outlaw. Time was when, young and free, he had roamed with his father, a chieftain, on his native hills, within a hundred miles of Cape Town. But by and by there came white men from Holland, and took away their land from them, and made the black men serve them and do their bidding. Farther and farther was Africaner driven from the land of his forefathers, till at length he and his clan

were forced into the service of one of the Dutch farmers. Africaner was to this farmer for many years a brave and faithful shepherd; his services were ill repaid; the cattle of his people were seized, their children murdered, and he and they reduced to poverty and distress. Africaner went to complain of their wrongs, and the farmer answered him by pushing him down the steps of his house door. At this instant Titus, the brother of Africaner, shot the farmer dead. Africaner gathered all who were left of his people around him, escaped to Namaqua Land, settled on the banks of the Orange River, and lived by plundering the native tribes and the foreign settlers. It was about a hundred miles from his kraal or village that the missionaries settled.

After a while, Abraham Albrecht fell ill. There were no physicians in that dreary land, so his brother, Christian, resolved to take him

to the Cape. The journey, painful to the healthy, was too much for the sick man, and he died soon after he reached his journey's end, saying, "I go to Jesus." Christian Albrecht married a pious and well-educated woman, and returned with her to Namaqua Land. The widow and child of his brother Abraham returned with them, and together they began with fresh ardour the work they so much loved.

The privations which these faithful missionaries had endured, their toilsome journeys, and the parting from the relative whom they so dearly loved, were little to the sorrows that now burst upon them. Africaner had been enraged by fresh ill usage:—he was falsely informed that the missionaries were helping his enemies, and he vowed vengeance on them all. For a whole month the missionaries were in constant terror of Africaner's coming. Once they dug square holes

in the ground about six feet deep, and with the tilt-sail of the wagon thrown over the top of the pit, remained buried alive, and all but suffocated, for a week. Yet still they lingered. To leave the people over whom their hearts had yearned, and who were dearer to them for all they had suffered for their sake, and to leave the work for which they had given up all earthly comfort, was worse than death. At length, finding that in that state they could not settle or do any more good, they buried their furniture in the sand, and went to the colony for advice and assistance.

It was well they went when they did. In a little while Africaner came, and found them gone: he searched the ground for their buried treasures, and having ravaged the place, one of his men took a firebrand and set fire to the houses and huts, and nothing was left of the missionary settlement but a heap of ruins.

The all-but broken-hearted missionaries

reached Silver Fountain, and five days after, Mrs. Christian Albrecht breathed her last. Her husband began the mission again at Pella, some distance from Warm Bath. Other missionaries went to his help, and five hundred of his old hearers soon gathered around him. He did not live to labour long. He soon followed his dear wife to heaven, but not before the joyful news had reached him on his dying bed, that peace had been made with Africaner, and missionaries received, not as before, at a hundred miles distance, but at his own village.

It was through Mr. Campbell that this was brought about. On his first visit to Africa he travelled as far as Pella. He wrote a letter to Africaner, saying that the good people of England were willing to forgive all, and to send him a missionary, if he was willing to receive one. When the letter was written, it was difficult to find any one brave enough to

carry it. At length Mr. Sass, one of the missionaries at Pella, offered to be the postman; he set off on his journey, but was obliged by hunger and thirst to give it up. On his way back, he and his people were nearly killed by thirst: they found water in a hole in a rock. A large hyena had died in this hole, and the stench was horrible; as the thirsty travellers tried to draw it out it went to pieces in their hands. The panting beasts of burden refused the water, but the men drank. A relation of Africaner was found, who took the letter to him.

Africaner was pleased with the offer of a missionary. As it took some time to send for one from England, Mr. Ebner was in the mean time sent to him from Pella. In a little while Africaner, and his brothers, David and Jacobus, and a number of his people were baptized. Africaner had still, however, much to learn. His heart was not yet quite softened, and he and Mr. Ebner did not get fond of one another.

In 1817, Mr. Moffat, who was then about twenty years of age, went to join Mr. Ebner. As he travelled upwards from the Cape, he fell in with some of the Dutch farmers. They would not believe that Africaner could ever become a Christian, and they prophesied that he would kill Mr. Moffat. One of them said, "He will set you up as a mark for his boys to shoot at." Another, "He will strip off your skin, and make a drum of it to dance to." Another, "He will make a drinking-cup of your skull." One kind motherly lady, wiping the tear from her eye, bade him farewell, saying, "Had you been an old man, it would have been nothing, for you would soon have died, whether or no ; but you are young, and going to become a prey to that monster."

If you wish to know all about Mr. Moffat's journey, you must read it in his big book, for it will not go in this little one. When he reached Africaner's kraal, he did not meet

with a very warm reception. It was an hour before Africaner came out to him. At last he made his appearance, and he said, "Are you the missionary sent by the people in London?" Mr. Moffat was young, and his look was kind, and his countenance interesting. Perhaps Africaner was taken with his look. He seemed pleased when Mr. Moffat answered, "I am;" and he said, "As you are young, I hope you will live long with me and my people."

The next thing to be settled was, where was Mr. Moffat to lodge? There were no "houses to let" there. But it did not take long to build one in the fashion of the country. Africaner ordered a number of women to come. Mr. Moffat was puzzled to think what they could be for, till they came bringing bundles of native mats and long sticks, like fishing-rods. Africaner pointed to a spot of ground, and said, "There, you must build

a house for the missionary.” In rather more than half an hour, they had built him a little round house, as you see in the frontispiece.

It was not a particularly comfortable house. When the sun shone it was unbearably hot: rain, wind, and dust, all found a way into it. A hungry dog would sometimes get in and steal poor Moffat’s food—a serpent coil itself in one corner—or a couple of bulls stroll in and disturb his night’s rest, and almost crush him and his house to pieces by their quarrels.

He soon found that Africaner and his brothers were not good friends with Mr. Ebner. Titus, who had shot the farmer, was not at the station when Mr. Moffat arrived. As soon as he returned, he went to Mr. Ebner’s house, and with many abusive words, threatened to kill Mr. Ebner if he did not go. Mr. Ebner said he would not stay with such people any longer, and he packed up, and with his wife

and children, wagon and goods, went off to another station.

Then did the young missionary who was left behind indeed feel alone. The other missionaries, in the midst of all their trials, had been comforted by each other's sweet companionship, but he had neither friend, nor brother, nor counsellor. He was among strangers and savages in a barren and miserable country, where there was not enough water to cultivate the ground; where he could get neither bread, nor fruit, nor vegetables; and as his salary was only \$125 a year, he could not afford to send to the Cape. His food was sometimes meat without salt—sometimes milk—sometimes both—sometimes he could get neither. He had often pretty long fasts, and was obliged to tie a thong tightly round his waist, that he might not feel the gnawings of hunger. Sometimes after morning-service, he would shoulder his gun and

go to the plain or mountain brow in search of something to eat, and return as empty as he went to preach again to the people.

He had left a dear mother in his native land—a Christian mother, whose prayers and early lessons had made him a missionary. Ah! did he not long again to hear her soothing voice, and again, as in childhood, to throw his arms around her neck, and tell her of his lonely and sorrowful feelings—of all that, by turns he feared and hoped! She was far away, and could only follow him with her prayers. Thoughts of her often came over him in his loneliness, and he says, “I was wont to pour out my soul among the granite rocks surrounding the station, now in sorrow and then in joy, and more than once took my violin, once belonging to Christian Albrecht, and reclining upon one of the huge masses, have, in the stillness of the evening, played

and sung the well-known hymn, a favourite of my mother's—

“Awake, my soul, in joyful lays,
To sing thy great Redeemer's praise,” &c.

And her prayers were answered, and those of the missionaries who had gone to Heaven. The pleasant part of the story is yet to come. The day that began in clouds, closed in sunshine. “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” “They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.”

Mr. Moffat began his missionary work by holding morning and evening service, and keeping school for three or four hours in a day. He was soon delighted with the earnest attention of the chief. He says that he might as well have doubted of morning's dawn, as of Africaner's attendance at the hour of

worship. He would sit under the shadow of a great rock nearly the live-long day, eagerly studying his Testament—or in his hut, with his thoughts so fixed on its blessed words, that he did not know what his family were doing, or when strangers entered. He would search it through and through to find one passage to explain another; and what he could not understand, he would ask his missionary to tell him at the close of the day. “Many,” says Mr. Moffat, “were the nights that he sat with me on a great stone at the door of my house, conversing with me till the dawn of another day, on creation, providence, and the glories of the heavenly world.” The missionary forgot alike his weariness and his needed rest, and often did the hearts of both burn within them as they thus talked the night away. Africaner would at last sometimes rub his hands on his head, saying, “I have heard enough; I feel as if my hea

were too small, and as if it would swell with these great subjects.”

Soon, all could see the change that had been wrought in Africaner. He became the peacemaker of those parts, and would stand between two angry parties, entreating them to be friends. His heart became tender as that of a little child. He comforted those who were in distress, he wept with those that wept, and from his little store relieved the widow and the fatherless. Mr. Moffat was one day, in absence of mind, looking earnestly at him. Africaner modestly asked the reason. Mr. Moffat said, “I was trying to picture to myself your carrying fire and sword through a country, and I could not think how eyes like yours could smile at human woe.” Africaner answered not, but shed a flood of tears.

Mr. Moffat was anxious to make the people more cleanly and industrious, and Afri-

caner was eager to help him. "It would have made any one smile," says Mr. Moffat, "to have seen Christian Africaner and myself superintending the school-children, now about one hundred and twenty, washing themselves at the fountain. It was found that their greasy, filthy *carosses* of sheepskins soon made them as dirty as ever. The next thing was to get them to wash their mantles, &c. This was no easy matter, from their being made chiefly of skins, not tanned, and sewed together with thread made of the sinews of animals. It required a great deal of coaxing, argument and perseverance to get them to undertake the task; but this, too, was also accomplished, and to their great comfort; for the sheep-skins formerly harboured so much company, that the children could not sleep soundly."

Africaner's brothers, David and Jacobus, were both believers, and were very useful to

Mr. Moffat in the school, and in instructing the people. The fierce Titus too, though he did not till long after, become a Christian, became very fond of Mr. Moffat. He would come to the house of God, or with his brother sit all night listening to the conversation, just because he thought it would be pleasing to his missionary. Often would he come to Mr. Moffat's hut to ask what he could do for him; or, when he found him with nothing to eat, would take his gun, and go in search of game, and bring him back a dinner from the wilds. He gave Mr. Moffat his only horse, because it was safer for him to ride on than an ox. He seemed as if he would cheerfully have laid down his life for the missionary.

Mr. Moffat had not been very long with Africaner and his people, when he was taken ill with bilious fever. This was caused by the heat of the weather, in his small, close

house, and living on meat and milk, without salt or vegetables or bread. The fever rose so high, that in two days he became delirious, and did not know any thing that was going on. After a while, his senses returned for a few moments, and opening his eyes, he saw Africaner sitting by his bed-side, gazing on him with eyes full of pity and tenderness. Perhaps he thought that this was the last time that Mr. Moffat would be able to speak; for, with the big tear standing in his eye, he asked Mr. Moffat how, if he should die, they were to bury him? "Just in the same way as you bury your own people," was Mr. Moffat's reply. But it was not the will of God that they should so soon part, and Africaner's joy was full, when, a few days after, Mr. Moffat was well enough to be again among his people.

Mr. Moffat did not remain all the time at Africaner's village. He made two long jour-

neys, besides several short ones. Children in our country like travelling; but it is no treat in South Africa. The first of these journeys was to a country to the north, on the borders of the Damara Land. It was said that there were many fountains of water there, and they hoped to find a better place for a missionary station. At Africaner's station there was not enough water to cultivate the ground, and rain scarcely ever fell, and the people were often sadly distressed. There was, however, one great difficulty before setting out. The wagon was broken, and who was to mend it? Mr. Moffat had never learned smith's work, but he had watched the smiths at Cape Town, and there is nothing like trying. He had two large goats killed, and with their skins he contrived to make a pair of bellows. The people all stood by to see him blow the new-fangled bellows. He wished them far enough away,

for he was afraid he might burn his fingers with the first piece of iron, and perhaps look rather foolish. However, he succeeded: the wagon wheels were mended to admiration, and the travellers set off on their journey. Besides Africaner, Titus and more of his brothers, and thirty men, went with Mr. Moffat, for they determined that plenty of people should go with him to take care of him. They found no place for settlement in that barren and thirsty land. They were often badly off for food, and were thankful to eat the flesh of zebras and giraffes, though it was almost as tough as leather. They were in still greater distress for water, and were thankful when they reached home at last, after their unsuccessful and dangerous journey.

Mr. Moffat sometimes went on preaching journeys to distant villages. He rode on the horse that Titus had given him, and his interpreter rode by his side on an ox. After a

hot day's ride to reach a village in the evening, the people would give him a draught of milk, and then the whole village, young and old, would assemble in a nook of the fold, among the cows, while he preached Christ to them. Then he would lie down on a mat at the door of one of the huts, and start in the morning for another village.

After a few months he again set off to look for a station in the Griqua country. The account of this journey would be enough for a little book of itself; therefore we must leave it, and return to Africaner's history.

As Africaner was an outlaw, he could not venture to go far from home to trade for the things his people wanted. After two years, Mr. Moffat thought it would be a good plan to take him to the Governor of the Cape, and to have him restored to favour. Africaner was much surprised at this proposal. He looked at Mr. Moffat again and again, and

said, "I thought you loved me; and do you advise me to go to the government, to be hung up as a spectacle of public justice? Do you not know that I am an outlaw, and one thousand rix dollars have been offered for this poor head?" However, after much prayer to God, he resolved to take the advice of his missionary, and to go. Nearly all the people went with them half a day's journey to the banks of the Orange River, and shed many tears at parting.

That Africaner might not be known, he went as if he had been Mr. Moffat's servant. There was no great fear of Africaner being taken for a chief by his dress. Mr. Moffat gave him one of the only two good shirts he had left. Over this Africaner had a pair of leather trowsers, a duffel jacket, much the worse for wear, and an old hat neither white or black. You may imagine what sort of a figure he cut. You will not like

the good old man less, because his dress was shabby.

When they reached Pella, Mr. Moffat says it was a feast fit for angels, to see the meetings that took place. Warriors who had not seen one another since they met face to face in savage battles, now met as brothers, and talked of Him, who, without a sword or spear, had subdued both.

As the travellers drew near the borders of the colony, the farmers were astonished to see Mr. Moffat again. Africaner, safe in the wagon, was sometimes amused to hear what they said. I will just tell you about one of them.

This farmer lived on a hill. Mr. Moffat left the wagon and walked towards his house. The farmer came down the hill to meet him. Mr. Moffat held out his hand, and said, "I am glad to see you again." The farmer put his hand behind him, and

said, rather wildly, "Who are you?"—"I am Moffat. I wonder that you should have forgotten me."—"Moffat!" said the farmer. "It is your ghost!" and he drew back.—"I am no ghost," said Mr. Moffat.—"Don't come near me," cried the farmer; "you have long been murdered by Africaner."—"But I am *no* ghost," repeated Mr. Moffat, and felt his hands, to show that he was flesh and blood. Still the terrified farmer would have it, "Every body says you were murdered, and a man told me he had seen your bones." At length he ventured to hold out his trembling hand, saying, "When did you rise from the dead?"—Then they walked towards the wagon, and talked of Africaner. Mr. Moffat said, "He is now truly a good man."—That the farmer found still harder to believe. By this time they were come up to Africaner, who was out of the wagon, and sat smiling at their feet. Of course the

farmer did not know who it was, and he said at last, "Well, if what you say is true, I have only one wish, and that is, to see him before I die, and I will go with you on your return, although he killed my own uncle." Mr. Moffat knew that the farmer was both a kind and a good man, and he did not feel afraid to say to him, "This, then, is Africaner." He started back, and cried, "Are you Africaner?" The good old chief arose, doffed his old hat, made a polite bow, and said, "I am." And when the farmer saw that the savage was indeed become gentle as a lamb, he lifted up his eyes, and exclaimed, "O God, what a miracle of thy power! What cannot thy grace accomplish?"

The Governor of the Cape (Lord Charles Somerset) also doubted the report; but after seeing Africaner, he too was convinced. He gave Africaner a wagon worth £80, as a proof of his kind feeling.

How glad were all the good people at the Cape to see Africaner! How interested in looking at his well-worn Testament, and in listening to his pious and sensible conversation! Mr. Campbell, too, was at the Cape on his second visit to Africa, and says, in his Journal, "I could not but view with astonishment, the change that grace had made in Africaner; saying in my mind, "Is this the man who was the terror of tribes far up Africa, and whom I was almost afraid to meet when I was among them a few years ago? Is this the man who burned to ashes our missionary station at Warm Bath? Is this the man who now loves Jesus Christ, and us for his sake?"

Africaner returned alone, and became himself a minister to his people, Mr. Moffat being chosen to go as a missionary to the Bechuanas. A year after, when he thought Mr. Moffat must have reached Lithako, Afri-

caner crossed the continent in his wagon to bring the books and furniture which Mr. Moffat had trusted to his care. This journey was, in great part, over a plain of deep and scorching sand, and going and coming it took him full three months. It was his last proof of love to his missionary. At Lithako he also again met Mr. Campbell, and travelled with him a hundred miles to the Griqua country. Here Mr. Campbell beheld the meeting of Africaner and the converted Griqua chief, Berend Berend. In the days of heathenism, these two chiefs had had many a deadly conflict. Now they were both Christians. They embraced, they knelt at the same stool, and joined in prayer and in hymns of praise to the same dear Saviour.

In the year 1823, rather more than two years after, Africaner died. On his death-bed, he called his people round him, and

charged them to live in peace as became the gospel. He said, "I feel that I love God, and that he has done much for me of which I am totally unworthy. My former life is stained with blood, but Jesus Christ has pardoned me, and I am going to heaven."

Titus Africaner became a Christian after his brother's death, under the care of the Wesleyan missionaries.

Dear readers, what are your thoughts after reading this little book? Do you think the pleasures of the missionary made amends for his former trials? I know what he would say. He would tell you that he had been well repaid for giving up all things for the sake of Jesus, and that there is no joy on earth like that of winning souls to Him. And if such is the joy of earth, what will be the joy of *heaven*?—where the missionary and his beloved converts shall meet where

“neither the heat nor the sun shall smite them; where the Lamb shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!”

You have all read Isaiah's beautiful prophecy in the eleventh chapter of his book, where he says, that when the gospel has spread throughout the world, and all nations have received and felt its power, then “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together; and that they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain.” There are some people who think this means that men, savage as lions, and cruel as wolves, and bloodthirsty as leopards, shall lose their savageness, and become gentle as the lamb, and harmless as the kid, by the power of the gospel of Christ. Whether this is all the passage means or not, I do not say; but in all

the places where the missionaries have laboured, and people have been converted, such results are seen. The savage becomes kind, and the man that delighted in murder, and was the terror of the land, becomes as gentle and inoffensive as the little child.

A striking instance of this was seen some-time ago in the case of a convert in New Zealand. A carpenter that was building the new church of the mission station, called Waimati, engaged a native convert to go and work in his garden, promising to pay him for his labour. As soon as the native had finished, he went to the carpenter for his wages; but one of the other workmen ordered him away, knocked him down, and kicked him very cruelly while lying on the ground. The native bore it all most patiently, and never murmured nor resisted till the other ceased his cruelties; but then, starting to his feet, he seized the other by the throat, shook him as

if he had been a cat, and throwing him down, took a sharp tool with which he might have taken away his life, and brandished it over his head. "Now," said the native, "you see your life is in my hand. You owe your life to the preaching of the gospel ; my arm is quite strong enough to kill you ; my arm is willing to kill you, but my heart is not, because I have heard the missionaries preach the gospel. If my heart was as dark as it was before I heard them preach, I would strike off your head. You owe your life to the preaching of the gospel."—He then let him go, we hope, to respect that gospel for all his life, which had so truly proved its power to turn the lion into the lamb.

My young reader, has it done so to you? or is your heart filled with revengeful thoughts, whenever injuries are heaped upon you? How much then you may learn from even Africans and New Zealanders of the mind and the spirit you ought to show !

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